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Newsletter



OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

Declining commodity prices - especially the price of grain - is in the forefront of the news and in our thinking at the time this is written. What does the changing price level mean? That is a question every one would like to have answered; but so far the general flow of opinion in business and in government has revealed great variations in pinning down 1) the reason why and 2) where we are headed. This all adds up to uncertainty and confusion.

For us, of course, the immediate question is whether the changes in commodity prices diminish the need for conservation. Can we sit back and feel our work is done?

The answer is: No, we must continue to conserve.

In fact, the need for conservation could be even greater as a result of the down-swing. If the ebb in prices turns out to be only a momentary decrease, we could discover that we have lost ground.

The essential facts in the situation are:

1. Ups and downs in commodity prices cannot add a grain of wheat or a kernel of corn to our country's immediate supply. Price changes, however, can re-direct the use of the grain. Lower prices are likely to lead to heavier consumption.

2. The changes, to date, have made little change in the cost of living in comparison with the inflationary peaks we reached last month.

3. Some of the commodities, of course, are now on the threshold of the seasons when supplies climb. This is particularly true of eggs, milk and dairy products. Declining prices, therefore, are to be expected in these commodities, and consumers should be urged to add them to their daily food in keeping with the downward trend and their own food budgets.

4. On the other hand, we are nearing the end of a season of relative plenty in meat. And farmers' own plans for production - geared to the present short grain supplies-give us no hope for an increased supply to come.

In fact, the downward trend in production will stay with us until farmers can tell whether the 1948 corn crop should lead them to lift their sights in 1949.

5. Weather conditions here at home and across the seas have rightly inspired us with some optimism. But, until those grain crops are in the bins, we can only hope that bad weather does not damage the currently good prospects.

6. The world food supply - despite reassuring reports of good wheat crops in the Southern Hemisphere - is still limited. Hunger still threatens Europe, and easing it is a prime essential to recovery. Conservation is thus necessary to help the United States fulfill its international obligations.

Hence the national program for food conservation needs your continuing support. You can help by keeping the facts of the basic condition before you and your neighbors.

LOCAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

We have received a letter from Dr. M. L. Blum, General Chairman of the Hazleton (Pa.) Citizens Food Committee. Dr. Blum writes:

"I have been receiving your newsletters and reading them carefully, and find them very interesting and full of good suggestions.

"The Hazleton Area Voluntary Food Conservation Program, as sponsored by the Hazleton Citizens Food Committee, is going right ahead with all kinds of plans to further the best interests of this program. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have distributed ten thousand window stickers to every home; we have large posters placed in stores, factories and schools; we are conducting a very comprehensive essay contest in the public and parochial schools of this area, stressing the importance of food conservation; fifty dollars in prizes will be given to students who write the best essays; talks to service groups and through the radio are made constantly on this subject; the press is also carrying all kinds of articles stressing the conservation of food.

"Please keep us informed with the things you are doing, and we will do the same.

"Thanks for your cooperation."

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Here is the condensation of a report submitted by the Memphis (Tenn.) Citizens Food Committee under the chairmanship of Lieutenant General Ben. Lear (Ret.):

1. The chairman of the Speakers Bureau has had speakers before every service, luncheon, civic, business and professional club in the city. He has succeeded in having reminders published in their bulletins as well.

2. During a twelve-week period there have been 172 news releases in the two daily papers. The Press Scimitar has sponsored a contest on "What

we are doing to save food", giving three bonds of \$100, \$50 and \$25 as prizes. There were over 500 entrants.

3. Transcriptions of $4\frac{1}{2}$ minute talks are being heard over the five local radio stations on two days each week.

4. Notices of appeal for food conservation have been carried in industrial bulletins and magazines, as well as letters in the pay envelopes of industries employing more than 50 people.

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The Reverend Jack Mendelsohn Jr., Chairman of the Rockford, Ill., Citizens Food Committee, has submitted a report on the accomplishments of his group;

1. Two radio programs on the food conservation theme.
2. Distribution of conservation posters to all food stores and churches in the city.
3. House-to-house distribution of 1,000 window stickers.
4. Block surveys on compliance with the program with results well-publicized in the press.
5. Press interview with the Committee's nutritionist on the grain-saving menus.
6. Two large billboards at each end of the city.
7. Preparation of a mimeographed folder on conservation hints to homemakers, distributed to all women's organizations in the city.

STATE EXTENSION SUPPORT

The Department of Agriculture has released Report No. 2 on activities of the State Extension Services in support of the food and feed conservation program. Space does not permit an extensive review of the report and, with apologies to those States not mentioned here, we list a few typical excerpts:

Tennessee, in an introduction to a seven-point series of recommendations, emphasizes that "food conservation to be effective must be practiced by both consumers and producers."

Rat Control programs in New Hampshire are being conducted on an intensive basis, county by county. Hillsboro County has had a "rat killing night" and more than 328 farmers simultaneously put out rat poison, which was only the first step in their aggressive war on the rodents.

Minnesota reports a series of local feeding schools conducted in 14 counties by extension specialists where information on the world food situation and what farmers can do to relieve it was presented and discussed. A complete program of publicity is also being carried on.

WORLD FOOD REPORT

The Department's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations recently put out a report on world food conditions. It notes that food production throughout the world is rising slightly. But, the report warns, "food shortages in some deficit producing areas are more critical than a year ago, and because of a 10 percent increase in population, per capita world food supplies are substantially below pre-war." The report goes on to say that many of these countries have been compelled to reduce already low rations. Furthermore, it emphasizes that "even these lowered rations can be maintained only by most careful utilization of domestic food supplies and by receiving as much help as possible from exporting countries."

